



King's Research Portal

Document Version
Peer reviewed version

[Link to publication record in King's Research Portal](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Ancarno, C. S., Davis, O., & Wyatt, D. (2015). Forging Communities: the CAER Heritage Project and the dynamics of co-production. In D. O'Brien, & P. Matthews (Eds.), *After Regeneration: Communities, policy and place* (pp. 113-130). Policy Press.

Citing this paper

Please note that where the full-text provided on King's Research Portal is the Author Accepted Manuscript or Post-Print version this may differ from the final Published version. If citing, it is advised that you check and use the publisher's definitive version for pagination, volume/issue, and date of publication details. And where the final published version is provided on the Research Portal, if citing you are again advised to check the publisher's website for any subsequent corrections.

General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the Research Portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognize and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the Research Portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the Research Portal

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact librarypure@kcl.ac.uk providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Section 3 – New places for communities

Chapter 8 Forging Communities: the CAER Heritage Project and the dynamics of co-production

Clyde Ancarno, Oliver Davis and David Wyatt

Introduction

Cardiff is Europe's youngest capital city and its history is dominated by its maritime and industrial heritage. But nestled deep in one of its suburbs, surrounded by houses, is one of the most important, yet little known and understood, prehistoric monuments in the region – Caerau Hillfort. Enclosing an area of more than 5 hectares, Caerau Hillfort, is by far the largest Iron-Age hillfort in south Glamorgan. The housing estates that surround the hillfort are home to more than 25,000 people – the largest social housing estates in Wales. Despite strong community ties, the people that live there are burdened by significant social and economic deprivation, particularly high unemployment. Its large population once fed the major manufacturing employers such as Ely Paper Mill and Ely Brewery, but after these closed down in the 1980s employment in the area has never recovered. This is partly due to poor educational attainment – almost 50% of 16 and 17 year olds have no qualifications and only 2% of school leavers go on to university (compared with 95% in other areas of Cardiff). Moreover, a disturbance in the summer of 1991 was publicized in the media as a 'riot' and led to a deluge of long lasting bad publicity which has given these communities a real stigma, particularly in the minds of residents of wider Cardiff.

As modern political and economic power have become concentrated in the centre of Cardiff and at Cardiff Bay, Caerau and Ely have become increasingly marginalised. Whereas this challenging environment has deterred archaeologists in the past, this was the very reason why the Caerau and Ely Rediscovering Heritage (CAER) project was established. CAER is not a straightforward community archaeology research project. It is underpinned by objectives forged during a series of initial meetings involving local residents, local schools representatives, the local community development agency, local heritage institutions and a small team of academics. Importantly, these objectives are not focussed upon archaeological or historical research but rather how such research might be employed to transform negative views associated with these local communities and the broader challenges which they face. From its outset, the project sought to utilise the community's rich and untapped heritage assets and local expertise to develop educational and life opportunities for its inhabitants: building confidence, challenging negative stereotypes and realising the positive potential of the process of research co-production. To date, the project has involved community members (including school pupils, young people facing exclusion, people experiencing long-term unemployment and retired people) in a variety of co-produced initiatives including: geophysical

surveys, museum exhibitions, adult learners courses, art installations, creative writing, dance performances, banner processions, history projects, film-making and the creation of heritage trails. At the heart of these heritage-themed initiatives have been two major community excavations at Caerau's magnificent Iron Age hillfort that have involved a wide range of local community members and school children in the co-production of archaeological research.

This chapter will begin by providing a summary of key aspects of the literature surrounding participation and co-production in Wales. It will move on to provide an overview of CAER's approach to co-production, summarising archaeological co-produced research activities to date. The concluding section will focus on evaluation data gathered during these co-produced activities, i.e. the reflections of a small group of community members on their involvement in CAER, particularly its community excavations carried out in June-July 2013 and 2014. These reflections, captured in the form of interviews, are used (i) to think about the potential benefits and problems of utilising co-production in relation to community heritage assets within the broader 'post-regeneration' policy context and (ii) to explore the challenges of evaluation in community co-production of research.

CAER therefore provides an interesting case study for exploring the implications pertaining to the evaluation of community co-produced heritage projects. Evaluation, a crucial exercise in terms of gauging the impact of such projects, formed an important focus of CAER which implemented a strategy of evaluation that is participatory in nature. In other words, community members, whenever possible, were involved in the evaluation process (see Jackson and Kassam, 1998). It is our premise that despite increasing interest in the implications of evaluating engagement in relation co-produced research in recent years, a lot of work still remains to be done to get unorthodox approaches to evaluation more widely recognised and accepted. This is echoed in Elliot et al (2012) who provide examples of reasons why community strengthening interventions 'do not have strong evidence base' (this is in relation to health and well-being). The qualitative analysis of the evaluative interviews incorporated in this chapter is therefore presented with these challenges and deficits in mind.

CAER and co-production

The term 'co-production' was developed in the US during the 1970's in response to urban fiscal cutbacks in public services. It advocates the involvement of citizens in 'producing public services as well as consuming or otherwise benefitting from them' (Alford, 1998: 128). In the UK, co-production was initially associated with the public service reforms of the successive Labour governments since 1997. It has more recently, and somewhat conversely, been taken up by Conservative leadership's 'Big Society' agenda in opposition to the perceived 'big state' policies associated with the previous Labour government (Needham, 2008: 221, Durose et al, 2012a). In theory, co-production is concerned with realizing the potential of a thriving civil society

through transformative, democratic, inclusive participation in public services; incorporating mutually beneficial reciprocal partnerships centred upon community activism, involvement and empowerment (Boyle and Harris, 2009). Several key 'ingredients' for successful and transformative co-production have been identified by a number of authors. These include: a focus on community assets rather than deficits; valuing equally the contribution of all participants (whether trained professional or community volunteer); project sustainability and continued or long term involvement; the development of social networks through face-to-face contact; reciprocal and mutually beneficial partnerships (both organisational and individual) and gaining skills and enrichment through the processes of co-production (Boyle and Harris, 2009; Needham, 2008; Durose et al, 2012b; Cornwall, 2008).

In Wales, values of community activism have long been the rallying cry of Welsh politicians (Rees, 1997). Indeed, active citizenship and community participation were effectively hardwired into the 'Yes' campaign for devolution (Dicks, 2014). Following the success of the devolution campaign, the Welsh Assembly Government placed a statutory obligation on local partnerships which was intended to ensure the inclusion of previously excluded groups in their decision making processes - with equal representation for the public, private and voluntary sectors - 'the so called 'three-thirds' principle' (Bristow et al, 2009: 905). They also instigated a radical 'non-prescriptive' regeneration programme, Communities First (C1), within the 'most disadvantaged communities' across Wales (Dicks, 2014: 960). From the outset, the C1 programme was steeped in the co-production principles of active citizenship, community activation and 'radical aims of empowering communities' (Ibid.). Yet, as recently highlighted by Dicks, there is a significant gulf between rhetoric and practice in relation to this drive for participatory regeneration in Wales. She contends that since the programme's inception in 2001, C1's radical co-production objectives have been inhibited, over time, by a range of factors including: 'top-down' political agendas, rigid systems of financial accountability, target driven monitoring procedures and a culture of 'risk averse' management at both local-authority and national level (Dicks, 2014 - for a practitioner's perspective on these issues see Horton, 2012). Bristow et al have similarly noted that significant tensions have arisen 'between the inherent focus of policy programmes on governance efficiency and the desire for greater inclusion' in relation to the implementation of the Welsh Government's 'three thirds' principle (Bristow et al., 2009: 917).

The work of Dicks and Bristow et al (op. cit.) reveal the problematic and politically charged nature of co-production in relation to community development initiatives in Wales. Yet, while discussions concerning co-production are frequently framed around the highly politicized arena of public service provision, there has been far less emphasis on the significance of the co-production of research. At first glance, this would appear to be an avenue of discussion liberated from the heavy political 'baggage' surrounding public service co-production. However, as Matthews and O'Brien have pointed out in chapter 3, in the face of cuts in services to community

development, community heritage and participatory arts, the *Connected Communities* programme has been criticised for being a 'very expensive community development project' which has 'merely stepped into a funding void left by others.' Moreover, Durose et al have highlighted the parallels between the perceived 'democratic deficit' of public institutions and the challenge of the 'relevance gap' in research - both of which have 'prompted attempts to increase participation from citizens and communities' (Durose et al, 2012b: 7). While employing the rhetoric of equality and reciprocity, research co-production projects, especially with marginal communities, can easily fall into the trap of top-down leadership which can intentionally or unintentionally reproduce unequal power relations (Durose et al, 2012b: 4-5; Hart et al, 2012).

So while the CAER team was not directly influenced by policy agendas pertaining to public service provision and austerity cuts they were, inevitably, influenced by similarly framed agendas pertaining to funding directives, university strategy and the Research Excellence Framework. The aspiration of co-production was therefore not approached uncritically; the team was well aware of the potential issues around power, politics and participation. In synergy with the practices of its partner community development organisation, Action in Caerau and Ely (ACE), and with the recent literature produced by a range of *Connected Communities* scoping studies (e.g. Durose et al, 2012b; Hart et al, 2012; Hale 2012), the CAER team was committed to involving community members actively in the co-production of research; valuing the contribution of all participants and partners in a mutually beneficial and reciprocal relationship.

To date, the project has involved a myriad of non-HE partners (e.g. primary and secondary schools, community groups, youth workers, community development workers, local residents, the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff Story Museum, Glamorgan Archives, Cardiff Council) alongside academics, undergraduates and postgraduates from a range of disciplines at Cardiff (history, archaeology, social sciences). A range of key strategies have been employed by CAER to ensure meaningful co-production and mutual benefit between the wide range of academic, heritage sector and community partners involved. These include: community consultation and involvement in funding bids; the embedding of an academic member of staff (Oliver Davis) within ACE; the development of a close partnership with local secondary schools; the establishment of community-based adult learners courses; the creation of partnerships with a local youth centre and the National Museum of Wales to involve young people facing exclusion in creating a heritage themed art; community outreach opportunities for university students working closely alongside community participants. The wide ranging nature of the project's impacts, partnerships and the embedding of academics and a professional artist within a community context resulted in multifarious, often 'organically' nurtured forms of engagement and co-production. This included the embedding of research co-production within the curricula of participating secondary schools with pupils

undertaking geophysical surveys, archaeological excavation, creating museum exhibitions, performances and artwork, heritage trails and participating in a Timeteam programme in April 2012. The involvement of a professional artist, Paul Evans, in all stages of the project proved a particularly successful strategy in this respect. Paul designed and facilitated creative forms of engagement with local heritage themes including large eco-graffiti art installations, puppet shows, the design of a heritage trail and the creation of an Iron-Age themed mural with both local pupils in mainstream secondary education and young people excluded from school. Furthermore, the embedding of research within a series of free accredited adult-education courses in practical archaeology, in association with Cardiff Centre for Lifelong Learning, proved successful in engaging long-term unemployed males in co-production – with undeniable benefits in terms of progression and confidence building for a number of these individuals (Davis and Sharples, 2014: 59-60)

CAER also sought to establish new social and professional partnerships thereby creating a new 'community of practice' (Hart et al, 2012). A crucial ingredient in this creation was the equal value placed on the contributions and 'knowledge bases' of all partners, whether trained professional or community volunteers (Ibid., 6). From the outset, community members, secondary schools and community development agencies were integrated in the project's development. This included the establishment of a 'Friends of Caerau' community group which continues to meet bi-monthly and organises litter picks, trail clearances and heritage events. It also included the establishment of a special partnership with the management team at two local secondary schools, Glyn Derw and Michaelston Community College, who embedded aspects of local heritage into the curriculum. Moreover, CAER has grown from relatively humble beginnings in 2011 to become one of the key community projects of partner organisation ACE. ACE is a community-based organisation which aims to support the social, economic and environmental regeneration of Ely and Caerau. ACE staff worked with the university staff, every step of the way, to plan the development of CAER; providing access to a network of local community groups enabling the involvement of local residents in project activities. ACE also facilitated further funding grant successes (e.g. Heritage Lottery Fund's *All Our Stories*) and ensured that CAER was integrated into, and benefited from, 'Timeplace' (Ely and Caerau's timebank). ACE therefore brought incredible assets to the project, most notably the trust and networks that they had built up over years with local people and community groups, but also a deep knowledge of the area and an insightful understanding of the challenges faced by these communities. Over time, it is fair to say that the mutual respect having grown between the academic team and ACE staff has moved beyond partnership and is now akin to friendship.

The Digging Caerau Excavations

Of all CAER's varied co-production activities, the visceral and practical nature of archaeological research has arguably proved extremely effective in addressing the

project's underpinning social objectives. This brief overview of the community excavations is therefore intended to provide context for the qualitative evaluative analysis which follows. Both excavations were funded under the Connected Communities programme and involved hundreds of community members as active research participants.

Caerau Hillfort occupies the western tip of an extensive plateau, now cut through by the A4232 link road, and is surrounded by the housing estates of Caerau and Ely. The now ruinous and heavily vandalized parish church, St. Mary's (13th century), and a small Medieval ringwork, are located in the north-eastern corner of the hillfort. The entire area is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, a legacy stretching back to the early 20th century when its significance as an archaeological site of national importance was first recognised. Despite this, the ramparts of the hillfort are now obscured beneath thick woodland cover, which means that the obvious physical remains of prehistoric activity are hidden from view and difficult to understand. As a result, many local people, even those who live in the shadow of the monument, are unaware of the site's importance.

Although the site was subject to a topographical survey by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales in the 1970s, it has otherwise been largely ignored by archaeologists. This is partly explained by the paucity of archaeological research that has been carried out on Iron Age sites in south Glamorgan – no hillforts in the region have seen large-area excavations for instance – but the lack of previous work at Caerau may to some extent be due to external perceptions and unwarranted stereotypes concerning the hillfort's location within the estates.

At the outset of the project, knowledge of the Iron Age in southeast Wales, and of hillforts like Caerau in particular, was extremely limited – even basic chronological frameworks were poorly understood and questions about later prehistoric agricultural and economic systems, which could place south Glamorgan in a regional and national context, were unaddressed. Therefore, the CAER team realised early on that archaeological excavations at Caerau could provide the opportunity to explore these issues through co-produced research with the community.

In December 2012, a grant was secured from the AHRC's *Connected Communities* Heritage Development Awards to undertake large-scale excavations of the hillfort in the summer of 2013. This phase of the project, known as 'Digging Caerau', was designed to provide opportunities for a range of local people to be involved in all stages of the archaeological process from survey to excavation to post-excavation analysis. It built upon the obvious appetite for co-production of archaeological research that had been demonstrated by the engagement between academic researchers, local community members and schools in the planning, delivery and interpretation of a geophysical survey of the hillfort interior and the Time Team programme early in 2012.

Co-production was embedded into the project's DNA. Local schools, community groups and local residents together with academics were part of the project planning from the start, helping to identify research questions to be explored through excavation and target groups for engagement in the archaeological work. 'Digging Caerau' started with a training excavation for local people at St Fagans National History Museum in May 2013. St Fagans is only a mile away from the hillfort and recent redevelopment of the museum meant that the museum's 'Celtic Village' (made up of 3 reconstructed Iron Age roundhouses) was due to be demolished. This provided an opportunity for local people to learn basic excavation skills on a 'replica' Iron Age site before encountering the real thing as part of an accredited adult learner's course.

This was one of three adult learner's courses, delivered by Cardiff University's Centre for Lifelong Learning, that were embedded into the project. Each course in archaeological skills, excavation and post-excavation analysis, was designed to provide local adults from a range of educational backgrounds with experience of archaeological research processes and to facilitate progression – the courses were free. Other, more general objectives included confidence building, the development of transferable skills, and breaking down barriers to HE. In total there were 42 enrolments on the courses with 11 individuals enrolling on more than one. One of the students went on to enrol on a module on Cardiff University's Exploring the Past progression route onto a degree.

Following the dig at St Fagans were four weeks of excavation at Caerau Hillfort in June and July of 2013. This 'community dig' was combined with a Cardiff University training excavation for more than 20 undergraduate students. More than 1,000 local people visited the excavations while they were in progress and 120 more were directly involved in the archaeological work many coming back every day. The visitors and volunteers represented a diverse cross-section of the local community with all ages and genders represented from primary and secondary school children, 6th formers, young people excluded from education, to long-term unemployed people, people with physical and mental health issues, retired people, and working parents.

Three local secondary schools, Glyn Derw, Mary Immaculate and Fitzalan, were directly involved with the excavations with several classes from each school taking part. More than 80 pupils, varying in age-group from Year 7 to Year 13 visited the site and worked in small groups alongside professional archaeologists and undergraduate students. They were actively involved with various on-site activities including excavation, sieving and finds processing, and more creative activities such as making Iron Age pots.

An important aspect of the project was to maintain participation in the research process by non-academics beyond the end of the excavation. Indeed, studies on co-production and community partnership have identified the need for 'continuing

involvement' and 'the sustained pursuit of a shared enterprise' (Boyle and Harris, 2009: 16; Hart et al, 2012: 4). For the Digging Caerau excavations this was achieved through the ongoing involvement in the analysis of the finds recovered – for example an adult learner's course entitled 'Conserving Caerau's Finds' provided the opportunity for community members to conduct their own guided research into the artefacts derived from the excavation. They then produced posters which were displayed at CAER events and incorporated into a published booklet on the excavations.

In late summer 2014, a second year of excavation at Caerau was completed. Almost all of the local participants from 2013 returned, along with a large number of new visitors and volunteers. As the project gathered momentum and visibility interest significantly increased. This was amply demonstrated by a media story run by the BBC in June 2014 in which a mis-quoted headline stated that CAER were looking for 2,000 volunteers for the 2014 excavations (it had meant to say visitors!). Needless to say, this resulted in several hundred offers, which had to be carefully managed but, which demonstrated the power of archaeological research to engage and enthuse the local communities.

The educational benefits of the excavations have been various ranging from heightening awareness of the area to developing skills and raising aspirations to go to university. Most important of all, the process of digging Caerau and the new friendships and social and professional connections that it has forged are as valuable as the archaeology being uncovered. However, some of the most significant impacts have been at a very personal level. It is these qualitative experiences and the evaluation techniques employed to capture them which will be explored in the closing sections of this chapter.

CAER and the dynamics of evaluation and co-production

Despite the importance of evaluation in co-produced research, there appears to be little agreement over what evaluation of community co-production looks like and little debate over the fact that evaluation 'outcomes and outputs' are often aimed at very different people/organisations (e.g. funding bodies, community members/partners, academic institutions) and little recognition that there are many types of evaluation (e.g. quantitative, qualitative and participatory evaluation methods).

In many respects, CAER's evaluation approach evolved 'organically', like the project, from an ad-hoc and widespread 'separate approach' to an 'integrated' approach in which an evaluation plan was built into project activities and co-produced with project participants. It is contended here that the latter approach was the most worthwhile both for community members/partners and academics; with evaluation activities being tailored to clearly identified evaluation aims. Evaluation therefore came to be regarded as an ongoing process. Adopting this integrated approach led the CAER team to develop and employ an evaluation plan which addressed the following key

factors: aims, objectives, people involved, indicators and methodology. From this standpoint, evaluation was not seen as a feedback gathering activity but rather, as suggested by Bhasin and Kassam as a 'reflection on action' (Jackson and Kassam, 1998). The CAER evaluation strategy was therefore framed around the three following questions:

1. What is the purpose of the evaluation? (e.g. Who is the recipient of the evaluation?)
2. Who is evaluating whom?
3. What is the transformative potential of the evaluation (e.g. to which extent can it contribute to changing power relations)?

As alluded earlier, the CAER evaluation approach was (and continues to be) participatory, i.e. that evaluation must emerge primarily from 'within' to be authentic. For reasons of space, focus here is on evaluation data concerning local residents' experiences, although CAER equally valued the experiences of other parties, e.g. undergraduates, community partners and academics (see Davis and Sharples, 2014: 57-60). The interviews used to explore the impacts of the excavations and evaluation-related issues are derived from video and audio recordings (on average 2-5 minutes long) obtained respectively by a community member and trained filmmaker, Vivian Thomas, and one of the three authors, Clyde Ancarno, both of whom worked in close collaboration. Conveying here the full extent and significance of Vivian Thomas' involvement - as a community member who interviewees could 'open up to' - is impossible for reasons of space. Moreover, when Viv was himself interviewed, it became clear that his continued involvement and dedication to the project had equally impacted his life in a range of transformative ways, particularly in terms of expanding his social network in a manner which he had not foreseen and which he acknowledged resulted in an improvement in the depression he suffers.

Responses from four community members have been selected for this brief analysis. All have been involved in CAER since the start of the project and all participated in both excavations. They are Mary, Sam, George and Tom (all local residents' names have been changed apart from that of Viv above). Their ages range from 35-55 and all are facing challenges relating to long-term unemployment.

Working on the premise that insights into negative impacts are potentially more valuable for evaluation than those of positive impacts (Elliot et al, 2012), the community members were encouraged to be truthful and to contribute negative/critical/questioning views on the project should they wish to. What ensues is a summary of the qualitative analysis of the discourse of these interviews (based on transcripts of relevant sections).

Insofar as they were explicitly probed for critical perspectives on the project, the

interviewees expressed clear views that the project had been largely beneficial for both themselves and for the communities of Caerau and Ely more broadly. The few criticisms voiced were directly related to issues concerning continuity of involvement and project sustainability. For example, a key issue which was raised on a number of occasions by several interviewees related to funding. In this respect, concerns were raised about financial constraints which in the past have significantly restricted the scope and longevity of community projects in the area. Within this context, one of the local residents' frustration about the periods of time when things were not moving fast enough is particularly relevant:

Things from my point of view could be moving quicker but I think that's more on the lines of the fundraising and getting the politicians to pull their fingers out if they can but I think we're getting there. (George, 2014)

These concerns appear to highlight an important tension facing academics involved in community co-production of research, namely the collusion between the financial and capacity related constraints they work under and the need for continuity from the perspective of communities. Indeed, it is interesting that George's comment emerged during the 2014 excavation, following an unsuccessful application for a large three-year grant and at a time when Oliver Davis had ceased to be embedded in ACE because the Connected Communities grant which supported his position there had come to an end. The desire for project continuity (and thereby implicit concerns that it would not continue) were also evident from a number of interviewees both in 2013 and 2014:

Hopefully the same thing will happen next year because there's lots to be done up here it's obvious. (Mary 2013)

The desire for continuity, beyond the 2013 and 2014 excavations was also made clear:

I'm already hoping that next year they'll be coming back to do it again, get involved again. (Tom 2014)

I was up here all last year and again this year and hopefully next year <laughter>. I hope so I really keep my fingers crossed. (Mary 2014)

The interviews also indicated that the project allowed for a new or revived sense of 'ownership' to emerge in relation to both local heritage and the project itself. Indeed, the community members' sense of ownership of the project repeatedly permeates the interviews – a factor which, it has been argued, is critical for the success of co-produced community research projects (Durose et al, 2012b: 5-6, Hale, 2012: 5, Hart et al, 2012: 5-6, Needham, 2008: 223):

I happened to help get the whole thing off the ground I suppose. The initial meeting with Olly Davis and the Friends of St Mary's and I popped up to have a

go with the Time Team (George, 2014).

To be actually involved myself and get out and sort myself out. I can say it's such a privilege to me. You'd have never think you'd be sort of trusted or allowed to do such things like you know. It's been excellent, really good. (Tom, 2013)

Views regarding improved attitudes towards local heritage and community cohesion also emerged alongside stories of personal transformation:

It's a lot more looked after since they've started... It does definitely look a lot better up here. It was going to decline. It was quite bad up here at one stage so yes it's definitely helping what they're doing for sure. (Sam 2013)

I don't usually sort of interact with many people so it's been great really to meet different people, good people you know and have a focussed interest you know so it's been+ for myself it's been excellent so. (Tom 2013)

The interviewees also all stressed the ways in which CAER allowed for alternative and positive narratives about the community to emerge, hence offering a much needed counter discourse to the systematic negative framing of the area (e.g. in the media). This was best summed up by Tom:

Yes we've sort of been as an area we're pushed to the back a lot and have been for years so all of us we're at the forefront for something you know which is pretty amazing really. (Tom 2013)

The interviews also provided unforeseen insights into the way the project has benefited the health and wellbeing of some of the community members interviewed. This included Tom's ongoing fight against long-term depression (which also reflects Viv's experience alluded to earlier):

I suffer quite a bit from depression so it's given me drive to get out of the house, get involved, become part of a team. You know I sort of stick to myself a lot so+ I've talked to more people here in the last two weeks than I have in a long time so it's pretty+ for me it's cool like you know. It's given me a bit of drive you know and picked myself up, given me a boost, which I'm really grateful for. (Tom 2013)

Interestingly, these stories of significant personal transformation echo academic claims regarding the therapeutic nature of co-produced research (Needham, 2008: 223). All interviewees also commented on how the project allowed them to gain new skills including practical excavation skills, teamwork and confidence building and a better understanding of archaeological research. Indeed, archaeology is a recurrent theme in the interviews (and other sources of evaluation too). Community members expressed an avid interest in finding out about archaeology, particularly the

archaeology of an 'historic environment' which means something to them. Their deep sense of enjoyment (despite frequent allusion to how much physical hard work it was too) while digging physical remains of the past in their own community was clearly evident.

Hart et al have noted that there is a significant lack of empirical data on how community university partnerships work in practice (Hart et al, 2012: 9). Others have highlighted that there is 'little evidence or evaluation of impact in participatory research' (Durose et al, 2012b: 4). It is contended that CAER provides a fruitful avenue for future research in this respect; the first few tentative steps towards this have been taken here. Insofar as a 'community of practice' (CoP) can be defined as 'a collection of people who engage on an ongoing basis in some common endeavour' (Eckert 2006), this concept offers a compelling perspective for examining the new and multifaceted 'community' the CAER excavations have brought into being. The interviews build a picture of this new CoP as perceived and experienced from within. Notably, they emphasise the social nature of the excavations, the possibility to share/acquire knowledge and transcend apparently unequal power relations (including those pertaining to archaeological knowledge-related hierarchies). This new CoP, framed by the historic environment in which it is embedded, therefore contributes interesting insights into the mechanisms underpinning 'the challenge of working across and between organisations and sectors' in co-produced research (Hart et al 2012: 5) and provides a potent physical metaphor for digging down into the heart of the community to acquire knowledge. It also gives way to a re-energized sense of confidence and identity among the community members involved, founded upon a distinct and unique past.

The data presented also illustrates the challenges of evaluating impact within the context of co-produced arts and humanities research, particularly in relation to complex heritage projects such as CAER. The qualitative analysis of this small sample of evaluative interviews therefore allows for critical reflection on such evaluation concerns. The sample of interviews – conducted with and by community members - provides insights into the impacts of the project which quantitative methods could not have revealed, hence highlighting that new ways of thinking about evaluation are timely. There seems to be an urgent need for a broader range of 'forms of evidence' to be more widely accepted within academic circles, including 'creative' methods which some contexts (e.g. community festivals) or project characteristics (e.g. complex engagement in CAER) sometimes demand. This echoes Elliot et al (2012) who argue that mixed methods evaluation should be favoured. Yet the need for innovation in evaluation methods should clearly go beyond this dichotomous view and requires methods 'sensitive enough to pick up whatever individual stories are hidden behind the numbers' (Evaluating your HLF Project, 2008).

Conclusion

The analysis of the small sample of evaluative interview data presented in this chapter suggests that the impacts of CAER on the communities of Caerau and Ely and their local residents have been multifarious. As might be expected, some directly reflect the aims and objectives outlined in the co-produced project design, namely, to create educational opportunities and address negative stereotypes. However, unexpected stories of personal transformation, sometimes involving long-lasting changes in individual perspectives, have also emerged. Arguably, these transformational stories have only been possible because of the CAER team's commitment to the core principles of co-production as outlined by Boyle and Harris, 2009; Needham, 2008; Durose et al, 2012b and others.

Although the CAER team has adopted reflexivity in their approach to co-production, they would be the first to admit that their aspiration to full co-production has not been fully achieved. Funding criteria parameters and short-term timescales, together with career-based academic commitments and capacity issues within schools and other community partner organisations, are just some of the factors which continue to inhibit that goal. It is true that all key project development and funding decisions have involved ACE and the local schools. Yet, the clamour for funding to ensure 'the sustained pursuit of shared enterprise' (Hart et al, 2012: 4) has resulted, at times, in prescriptive funding applications which could only involve community members from a consultative perspective. This, perhaps, helps to explain some of the frustrations about the project 'not moving fast enough' expressed by the community members above. Moreover, while CAER does involve community members in the research process and indeed values all contributors, project events and activities continue to be instigated largely by the academic team in conjunction with ACE's development workers. As such CAER is best regarded as what Hale has termed a 'middle way' heritage project – amalgamating both 'top down' and 'bottom up' approaches to develop 'a collaborative model between funders, participants, engagement organisations and other community members' (Hale, 2012: 6). Full co-production is, without any doubt, a hard objective to achieve. Yet, the small sample of evaluative data provided here provides some indication that it is nonetheless an objective worth striving for.

References

- Alford, J. (1998) 'A Public Management Road Less Travelled: Clients as Co-producers of Public Services', *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 57(4), pp. 128-137.
- Blakeley, G. (2010) 'Governing ourselves: citizen participation and governance in Barcelona and Manchester', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 34(1), pp. 130–145.
- Boyle, D. and Harris, M. (2009) *The challenge of co-production*, London: NESTA.

Bristow, G., Entwistle, T., Hines, F. and Martin, S. (2009) 'New spaces for inclusion? Lessons from the 'three-thirds' partnerships in Wales', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 32(4), pp. 903–921.

Cornwall, A. (2008) 'Unpacking 'participation': models, meanings and practices', *Community Development Journal*, 43(3), pp. 269–283.

Davis, O. and Wyatt, D. (2013) *The CAER Heritage Project: Revealing the Hidden History of Caerau and Ely*, Cardiff School of History, Archaeology and Religion. Available at http://caerheritageprojectdotcom1.files.wordpress.com/2013/01/caerbooklet_english.pdf [last accessed 21.04.15]

Davis, O. and Wyatt, D. (2014) *Cardiff's Celtic Hillfort: Digging Caerau*, Cardiff School of History, Archaeology and Religion. Available at <https://caerheritageprojectdotcom1.files.wordpress.com/2013/02/caer2englishfinalweb.pdf> [last accessed 21.04.15]

Davis, O., Wyatt, D. and Sharples, N. (2014) 'Exploring Celtic Caerau: The CAER Heritage Project', *British Archaeology*, January February, pp. 32-37.

Davis, O. and Sharples, N. (2014) *Excavations at Caerau Hillfort, Cardiff, South Wales 2013 – An Interim Report*, Cardiff Studies in Archaeology Specialist Report 34. Available at <https://caerheritageprojectdotcom1.files.wordpress.com/2013/02/caerau-interim-web.pdf> [last accessed 21.04.15]

Dicks, B. (2014) 'Participatory Community Regeneration: a Discussion of Risks, Accountability and Crisis in Devolved Wales', *Urban Studies*, 51(5), pp. 959-977

Durose, C. et al (2012a) 'Illuminating the Evolution of Community Participation' Swindon, AHRC Connected Communities.

Durose, C. et al (2012b) 'Towards Co-production in Research with Communities' Swindon, AHRC Connected Communities.

Eckert, P. (2006) 'Communities of practice' in *Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics* 2: 683-685.

Elliot E, Byrne E, Shirani F, et al. (2012). 'Connected Communities: a review of theories, concepts and interventions relating to community-level strengths and their impact on health and well being.' Swindon, AHRC Connected Communities.

Evaluating your HLF Project (2008)

Hale, A. (2012) 'Linking Communities to Historic Environments: A research Review Summary' Swindon, AHRC Connected Communities.

Hart, A., Ntung, A., Millican, J., Davies, C., Wenger, E., Rosing, R. and Pearce, J. (2012) 'Community-University Partnerships Through Communities of Practice' Swindon, AHRC Connected Communities.

Horton, D. (2012) 'Is there a place for community development in Wales? Reflecting on 6 years of Communities First in Caerau and Ely', *Creating Co-Op Councils and Empowering Communities, Ideas Think Tank Wales*, pp 7-13.

Jackson, E. T. and Yusuf, K. (eds.) (1998) 'Knowledge shared: Participatory evaluation in development cooperation'. *IDRC*.

Needham, C. (2008) 'Realising the Potential of Co-production: Negotiating Improvements in Public Service' *Social Policy & Society*, 7(02) 221-231.

Rees, G. (1997) 'The politics of regional development strategy: the programme for the valleys' in: R. Macdonald and H. Thomas (eds.) *Nationality and Planning in Scotland and Wales*, pp. 98–110. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.